

# WANTED: The DUNES NATIONAL PARK

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Natural  
Wonderland  
in Indiana on  
Lake Michigan  
Should Be  
Saved for the  
People

**W**ANTED: The Dunes National park—in the sand dunes of Indiana on the shore of Lake Michigan between Gary and Michigan City!

The middle West has visited the playgrounds of the people in the scenic West—the national parks of the Rockies, Sierras and Cascades. It has found them good. It has fallen in love with the national park idea. Now it is asking: "Why not a national park right here, instead of half way across the continent?" For there is not a scenic national park worthy of the name between Rocky Mountain in Colorado and Lafayette on the coast of Maine.

So Indiana, Illinois and Michigan want a national park, and they have picked out the dunes as the right place for it.

How they are going to bring about its establishment is a big question. The proposed park area is all under private ownership and is held at speculative prices on the chance of a second Gary being built at the head of Lake Michigan. Even at actual values it would cost about \$2,500,000 to buy the 13,000 acres most desirable for park purposes. The scenic parks of the West were taken from the national forests and the public domain by congress. To date there is no precedent for the appropriation by congress of funds to purchase a national park area. Lafayette was presented to the government for national park purposes by the owners of the property.

Congress has no national park policy. It dilly-dallies with national parks as it does with most other things. It is now generous with appropriations and again niggardly; for instance, it gave Yellowstone \$334,000 and Yosemite \$255,000 in 1919 and kept Rocky Mountain, with twice as many visitors as both parks, down to \$10,000. Politics enters largely into all national park legislation. In the Sixty-fourth congress the interior department supported the bill to enlarge Yellowstone and the bill to add to Sequoia and change its name to Roosevelt. The agricultural department, because the proposed additions would be taken from national forests, and therefore from its control, opposed both bills, beating the former in the senate and the latter in the house. So there is no telling what congress will or will not do in the matter of national park legislation.

Can congress be induced to appropriate money for the purchase of private holdings for national park purposes?

This question has been put squarely up to congress by two bills introduced at this session. One calls for the appropriation of a million dollars or so for the purchase of Mammoth cave, Kentucky, and its environs for a national park. The other provides for the establishment of the Mississippi Valley National park on both sides of the Mississippi in southwestern Wisconsin and northeastern Iowa. Here the two states own the land under the river, the federal government controls its navigation, part of the proposed area is a Wisconsin state park, some of the land will be donated and the land to be purchased by the government has been appraised at a very moderate price.

Can congress condemn private holdings for national park purposes?

Nobody seems to know. Most lawyers would say off-hand that the state of Indiana can condemn the dunes for state park purposes. And presumably the state of Indiana could transfer the land to the federal government. The national park service has been looking into the question of condemnation. It is advised that the government can condemn private holdings inside of national park boundaries—in fact, a bill is pending to condemn 100 acres in General Grant National park which the owner will not sell for a reasonable price. As to the condemnation of patented land outside of a national park the national park service is yet undecided. Condemnation of the dunes has been advocated by private individuals and by the press.

The creation of Lafayette National park has established this precedent: The federal government will accept suitable land presented to it for national park purposes. So, while other questions are being thrashed out, the Indiana, Illinois and Michigan federations of the General Federation of Women's Clubs are engaged in a campaign to raise sufficient money by subscription to purchase the dunes and present them to the government for a national park.



LAKE MICHIGAN DESTROYER AND BUILDER

There is no question that the Indiana dunes are worthy of national park honors. October 30, 1916, a public hearing was held in Chicago by the interior department in pursuance of a senate resolution. In September, 1917, a printed report by Director Stephen T. Mather of the national park service was issued. This report eliminated from consideration all of the dune country except a strip along the shore of Lake Michigan about a mile deep between Miller's in Lake county and Michigan City. After describing the dunes with considerable enthusiasm, Director Mather says:

"Assuming, without further description of actual conditions in this dune country, that the sand dunes of Indiana are equal to those in any other section of the country; that they are the most accessible dunes; that they possess extremely interesting flora and fauna; that they offer unparalleled opportunities to observe the action of the wind and its influence on the sand and plant life; that the Lake Michigan beach is beautiful and offers bathing facilities for a multitude; that the recreational uses of the region are myriad, should they, or a large section of them, be preserved for present and future generations? If they should be preserved, are they worthy of inclusion in a national park? And if they are worthy of consideration as a possible national park, would it be practicable to establish them as such a park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people?"

He answers the first two questions emphatically in the affirmative. He says this region should be preserved to the people for all time and that it is worthy of national park honors. As to the third question, he thinks it one of legislative policy to be determined by congress, inasmuch as the dunes are not public lands, and private lands have never been purchased for national park purposes. He thinks the park should contain from 9,000 to 13,000 acres, extending 15 or 20 miles along the lake. He finds that options secured by speculators vary between \$350 and \$600 an acre, with one tract of 2,300 acres held at \$1,000 an acre.

"Manifestly," says Mr. Mather, "none of these lands are actually worth \$350 an acre at this time. A figure less than \$200 an acre probably represents the actual value of the average tract of land not under the influence of urban values, due to proximity to cities. Practically all of the larger holdings must be purchased in their entirety. I believe that 9,000 to 13,000 acres of dune lands can probably be secured for park purposes for approximately \$200 an acre. The purchase price of a park of the size suggested would therefore be between \$1,800,000 and \$2,600,000."

The proposed Dune National park is really a wonderful place. In the first place, the dunes are an uninhabited wilderness. The fact that there is an uninhabited wilderness within a few miles of the center of population—in 1910 at Bloomington, Ind.—and at the very doors of Chicago, the second city of the nation and the fourth city of the world, is in itself a marvel. Incidentally, the dunes are within a few hours by rail and automobile of 20,000,000 people. This makes them unique as a public playground.

Again: The dunes are a different world from the monotonous flatness of the Chicago plain. They are a country of hills and bluffs, gullies and valleys. There are all sorts of interesting variations: Little lakes, streams, bogs, meadows. The bluffs above the beach are imposing. The beach itself is a wonder—broad, smooth, clean, free from



A FOREST GRAVEYARD

rocks and stones and quicksands, sloping very gradually into deep water. There is probably no finer freshwater bathing beach in the world.

Don't think of the dunes as heaps of bare sand in a desert. They are exactly the reverse. They have water, trees, shrubs, vines, flowers, grass, birds and small wild animal life. The truth is that the dunes are a great natural propagating garden with a most astonishing array of trees and plants and flowers. This garden is packed full of flora from the Lake Superior region, the Atlantic coast, the middle South and the western prairie. It seems to have almost everything in the plant line from cactus to cranberries and from pines to tulip trees. A list of only the most characteristic and important plant species numbers 208.

To the ordinary visitor probably the spectacle of the "walking dunes" is the most interesting. Here he sees land in the making. Here today is a towering dune crowned with flowers and plants and trees; tomorrow it is gone and where it was is a great blow-out of glistening sand, with its steep sides strewn with dead trunks exhumed from an ancient graveyard of a previous forest. Today there is a deep gash in the bluff; tomorrow its place is taken by a very lofty heap of white sand that has come up, grain by grain, out of the lake, on which grasses and plants and shrubs and treelets are already struggling for a foothold. Today stands a forest on the edge of a shallow pond; tomorrow it is a cemetery, with even the tree-tops covered by sand marching in from the beach.

The accompanying map and diagram shows where the material that builds the dunes is coming from and how it gets there. Lake Michigan has been taking material from the west shore and depositing it at the dunes for a period reckoned at about 5,000 years. Previous to this period the level of the lake was 50 or 60 feet higher than now and the discharge was toward the Mississippi at a point near where now are the dunes. When the ice-gorge or glacier which prevented the discharge of water into the St. Lawrence was removed and the lake drained into the Atlantic instead of the gulf, the level dropped, the present lake currents set in and the building of the dunes was begun.

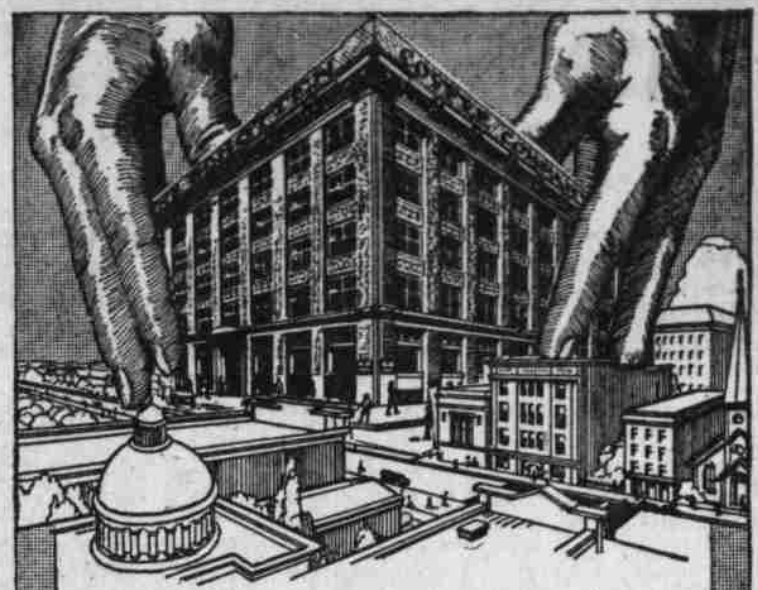
Public land surveys made in 1835 and soundings of Lake Michigan furnish the data for these estimates: During the last 5,000 years the waters of the lake have washed away about 500 square miles of land from the shore extending from the Indiana state line northward into Wisconsin. Where this land was is now water from 30 to 60 feet deep. The old shore line extends out from three to nine miles; then there is an abrupt drop of several hundred feet.

This is an unparalleled erosion; it is accounted for by the softness of the shore, which is largely composed of material that was ground very fine by the glaciers that deposited it. It is estimated that 7,000,000 tons of soil is taken yearly by the lake from the shore north of Chicago. So there is plenty of material for building operations at the dunes.

These facts suggest this interesting question: What will happen to the dunes when the supply of building material stops?

And stop it will, and that comparatively soon. For the shore north of Chicago will in a few years be pretty solidly settled by people who have money to spend to prevent further erosion of the shore. In fact, erosion has already been stopped over long stretches, and in many places the shore has been built out. The time is coming when the west shore will be protected from erosion by piers and breakwaters. The supply of building material for the dunes will presumably stop. Perhaps then the dunes will stop "walking."

Let us hope that long before that time the Dunes National park will be a people's playground, dedicated to public recreation forever.



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## One Drawback.

Washington is a colored man and he follows the profession of cleaning up back yards. Also he was the first man to think of wrapping a horse's forelegs with fly paper, keeping the flies off their legs and catching Mr. Fly at the same time.

One of the women he was working for said to him: "Washington, your fly-paper is a success. I see that by the great number of flies there are on the paper."

"Yes! Yes!" said Washington, "but once in a while that horse gets his legs too close together and they stick and I have to pull 'em apart for him."

## Agreed With the Doctor.

Mr. Griffin had spent an anxious afternoon at the office and hurried home at an unusually early hour.

"How do you feel, dear? What did the doctor say?" he asked his wife.

"Oh, he asked me to put out my tongue," she murmured.

"Yes?"

"And after looking at it he said: 'Overworked!'"

Mr. Griffin heaved an audible sigh of relief.

"I have perfect faith in that doctor," he said firmly. "You will have to give it a rest."

## Lots Better.

Smiley—I hope you won't mind if I bring a couple of friends home to dinner tonight, my dear?

Mrs. Smiley—Oh, no; that is better than being brought home by a couple of friends after dinner.

If the toothache doesn't worry a man it's because some other fellow has it.

Busy men nearly always are happy men.

## Mammoth Cave Has Rival.

Workers in a mine at Matehuala, near San Luis Potosi, Mexico, have discovered a cave which is said to be one of the largest in the republic.

It is more than 300 feet below the level of the mine and is 15 feet in width.

Its length has never been estimated, but exploring parties expect to survey it carefully in the near future. One of the most fantastic of its many grotesque adornments is a sulphurous fountain which pours out continuously a stream of blue water.

It promises to rival in magnificence Kentucky's famous Mammoth cave, when fully explored.

## Parchmented Leather Valuable.

Parchmented leather has greater strength while lacking the elasticity of tanned leather, and the belting of M. Felice Gilardini of Turin is designed to combine these special qualities. The hide being impressed deeply with a trelliswork pattern, the compressed portions are unaffected by tanning agents, while the interior of the meshes is tanned in the usual way.

The product has the required elasticity and is claimed to be so strong that belts may be much narrower than the ordinary.

## Keep Electric Fan Busy.

An electric fan properly placed in an open doorway or window will quickly ease away the flies and mosquitoes and doubtless scatter the mischief-making microbe.

## Fitting One.

"What kind of a pet has your college tutor?"

"Naturally, he has a coach dog."

Easy street's sunny side isn't paved with good intentions.

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